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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Comparison of Municipal Department Head Compensation in Onondaga County
Community Benchmarks Program
Fall 2000

Introduction

This study provides information about department head compensation in 28 of the 35 municipalities in Onondaga County. The study was conducted by the Community Benchmarks Program (CBP) at The Maxwell School of Syracuse University.

Methods

Data for this report were primarily collected through surveys distributed via fax to 35 municipalities in Onondaga County during the month of October 2000. Twenty-eight municipalities returned the survey. The surveys requested information about compensation and benefits of department heads. Background information about each municipality was obtained from the League of Women Voters. Population information was obtained from the Bureau of the Census. Parcel information was obtained from the Onondaga County Finance Department, Real Property Tax Division. Center Lane Mileage was obtained from the 1999 Highway Mileage Summary provided by the New York State Department of Transportation.

Findings

Salary

Salaries were compared using two different methods: 1) A scale based on the division of the salary by a common workload factor, i.e., per municipal parcels or center lane miles maintained and 2) A scale using actual salary dollars. For this reason there are two salary comparisons for each department head which result in different rankings, depending upon the method of analysis used.

1. 63% of assessors are paid more than the county average of \$4.73 per parcel, ranging from \$1.22 in the Village of East Syracuse to \$8.01 in the Town of Tully.
2. 56% of assessors are paid less than the county average of \$29,575, ranging from \$1,600 in the Village of East Syracuse to \$70,075 in the City of Syracuse.
3. 74% of codes enforcement department heads are paid less than the county average of \$6.55 per parcel, ranging from \$.89 in the Town of Fabius to \$29.70 in the Village of Marcellus.
4. 56% of codes enforcement department heads are paid less than the county average of \$20,970, ranging from \$600 in the Village of Fabius to \$50,763 in the City of Syracuse.
5. 60% of department of public works (DPW) superintendents are paid less than the county average of \$4,787 per center lane mile, ranging from \$1,693 in the Village of Fayetteville to \$8,563 in the Village of Marcellus.

6. 50% of DPW superintendents are paid less than the county average of \$42,745, ranging from \$30,160 in the Village of Camillus to \$55,253 in the Village of North Syracuse.
7. 56% of highway superintendents and the City of Syracuse DPW superintendent are paid less than the county average of \$765 per center lane mile, ranging from \$165 in the City of Syracuse to \$1,898 in the Town of Marcellus.
8. 69% of town highway superintendents and the City of Syracuse department of public works superintendent are paid less than the county average of \$41,357, ranging from \$28,850 in the Town of Fabius to \$65,000 in the City of Syracuse.

General Benefits

9. The Town of Camillus allows municipal department heads to carry over the greatest number of sick days in Onondaga County (225 days).
10. 60% of municipalities do not allow vacation days to be carried over.
11. 82% of municipalities do not reimburse department heads for unused personal days.
12. 82% of municipalities provide two or more of the following health benefits: medical, dental, and/or vision coverage.
13. 91% of municipalities allot money for at least three or more of the following professional advancements: tuition reimbursement, professional development, professional association membership and/or professional publications.
14. 56% of municipalities do not have any of the following in place: performance evaluations, employee suggestion boxes and/or employee satisfaction surveys.